

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

February 2012

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, February 16, 2012, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Rene McClendon, volunteer for the Mississippi National History Day Program. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call **by noon on Wednesday, February 15**, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of the lunch is \$10.00.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

The 2012 Membership Drive is on! It's time for current members to renew their membership in the Historical Society and to encourage family and friends to join us too. The price of membership is twenty-five (\$25) per year. The date on your address label is your date of membership expiration. If your label says 12/11 or before, it's time to renew! Please mail your renewal checks to Hancock County Historical Society, P. O. Box 3356, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521,



Yachting. Bay St. Louis, Miss.

Sailing was (and still is) a popular pastime on the Bay of St. Louis in the "Gay Nineties."

Life in Those Lovable "Gay Nineties"

from the *Souvenir Centennial
Edition, Hancock County Eagle*,
August 1958

Edited by
Eddie Coleman

Bay St. Louis, like many other thousands of cities, towns, and hamlets throughout our beloved America, lived through that interesting and lovable period, affectionately known as

the "Gay Nineties" [1890's]. Entertainment during those times often consisted of simple family gatherings in the evening to look at stereoscopes, read, play the piano, or gather for group singing. Occasionally, there were benefit concerts or dramatic sketches for charitable purposes; masquerade dances, called "dance soirees," were popular among the younger set of that time. Many of the more fortunate families owned yachts and launches and entertained their friends and families with delightful moonlight sailing

THE

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor
Jackie Allain, PublisherPublished monthly by the
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Email address:**hancockcountyhis@bellsouth.net****Website:**www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com
Marianne Pluim, Webmaster**LOBRANO HOUSE
HOURS**MONDAY — FRIDAY
10:00AM — 3:00PM
Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)**MISSION STATEMENT**

“TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION.”

parties.

Another popular pastime was card playing, especially for church benefits, the favorite games being Hearts, Euchre, and 500, though the more fashionable set were beginning to learn to play auction bridge, which later became the most popular game. Card parties were frequently given and were always beautiful affairs, where no one played for money, but for lovely prizes (usually cut glass or Gipsy Girl pictures.)

Of course, there were other forms of amusement, popular among which were the oft-mentioned moonlight hayrides mostly out to Brown's Vineyard (always well-chaperoned) and all-day picnics at Breath's Farm on Jordan River. Bicycle riding, especially on tandems, was another extremely popular method of passing the time, and a shop renting bicycles at twenty-five cents per hour did a tremendous business. Parties and dances at the ever-popular Clifton Hotel pavilion were summertime attractions for visitors from New Orleans as well as for the local young people. Hardly a home along the beautiful beach front with its trees and gardens was without a “summer house” or pavilion near the water's edge, where members of the family and their friends would sit and chat enjoying the shade and cool breezes during the long, hot summer afternoons.

At night, people by the hundreds waded up and down in the shallow water near the beach, looking for soft-shell

crabs and flounders by the light of kerosene torches; some carried fat pine burning in baskets attached to the end of a long pole or holder. Oysters were plentiful in those days, selling for twenty cents per one hundred. Sunday excursionists from New Orleans returned to their homes in the city with several jars full of the delicious bivalves.

Popular songs of that era were “In the Good Old Summer-time,” “Two Little Girls in Blue,” and “After the Ball.” Several local bands were organized for the town's entertainment, the more popular of which was known as the Eclipse Band. There were also several African-American orchestras, which hired themselves out for public dances and other forms of entertainment. A predecessor of the present Bay-Waveland Yacht Club was formed and occupied the building which now houses the Star Theater [the Big E lost in Hurricane Katrina]. In addition sailing was in its heyday, and the annual regatta, held during midsummer, was an outstanding affair.

Every summer for over thirty-five years, the townspeople bought ice cream from the Manieri Ice Cream wagon, which was driven up and down the streets of the town and sold ice cream to practically every man, woman, and child. The wagon was pulled by a familiar old horse with jingle bells around its neck. The noise of these bells was music to the ears of the children, who waited patiently for their sound, which announced the arrival of the “Ice

Cream Man."

Another popular refreshment of that time was the "nectar and cream soda" made at the de-Montluzin Drug Store, where on summer afternoons it was a customary sight to see carriages lined up for quite some distance, waiting to be served.

Of course, those were the good old days as the saying goes when it seemed that life was just a "bed of roses," but would we want to go back to those times and give up high-powered automobiles, airplanes electric refrigerators, computers, cell phones, etc.? That is the sixty-four thousand dollar question. One suspects that the answer would be a resounding, "NO!"

Did You Know This about Hancock County?

By
Scott Bagley

Did you know that the recently fire-damaged Hotel Reed building on the corner of Ulman Avenue and Beach Boulevard in Bay St. Louis was once the Weston Hotel as well as a nursing home? In 1923, Horatio S. Weston, president of the Weston Lumber Company in Logtown, built the Weston Hotel on this site to replace the old Pickwick Hotel (located at what is now the corner of Court Street and Beach Boulevard), which he had owned prior to its destruction by fire.

Upon Mr. Weston's death in 1930, the Weston Hotel



Postcard of the Hotel Weston c. 1920's
Later the Hotel Reed

was sold to Robert Reed and was renamed Hotel Reed. It operated under this name until 1959, managed by Howard LeTissier, and after his death by his widow.

In 1959, Dr. Wesley L. McFarland, a local physician, saw the need for a nursing home to serve the local population and thus was instrumental in converting Hotel Reed into such a facility. The home opened in 1959 with sixteen patients. In early 1962, Mr. and Mrs. David Smallwood bought the facility and incorporated it as Gulf View Haven Nursing Home. Over the next eighteen years this facility was to serve approximately two thousand patients with a staff that grew from twenty to sixty.

In 1977, Gulf View Haven was remodeled and renovated following action by the Mississippi Health Planning Agency and the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Upon completion of

the work, the facility had eighty nursing-care beds, of which twenty were for skilled care and sixty for intermediate care. At some point Gulf View Haven became known as the Hotel Reed Nursing Center, and it was under this name that the facility closed about a decade ago.

Following its time as a nursing home, this building stood empty. Many local residents and neighbors became concerned with its growing deteriorating condition yet remained hopeful that the building might nevertheless have a new life.

Early on Christmas Eve this past year, a fire started somewhere in the building. The blaze, for the most part, gutted the abandoned building. Just two weeks prior to the fire, the Bay St. Louis City Council had declared the building a menace to public safety. The exact cause of the fire is not yet known, and an investigation is ongoing. Ultimately, the final pages of the

history of this old building are yet to be written.

New Information on the Pirate House

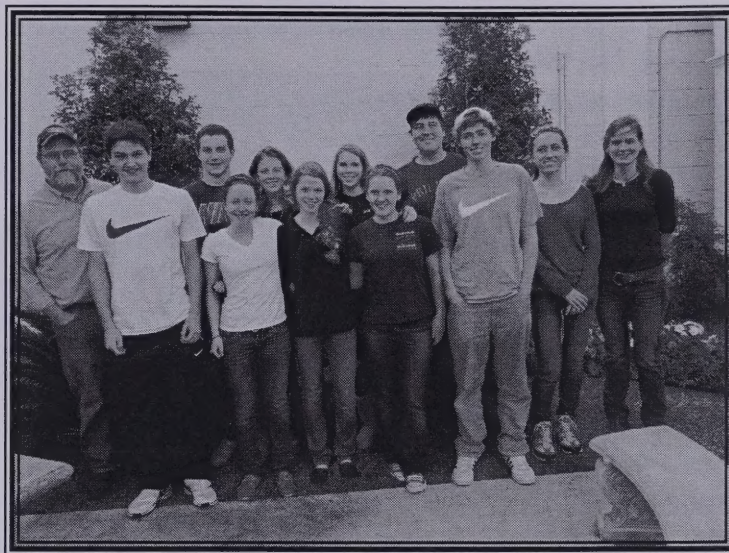
Russell Guerin has spent many hours for the past several years searching for information on the legendary Pirate House in Waveland, sorting fact from fiction. Recently he studied a copy of *The Lower Mississippi Valley Database Project: The Colonial Gulf Coast (Pearl River, Bay Saint Louis, Pass Christian, Biloxi, Pascagoula, Bayou La Batre)* by G. Douglas Inglis, Rodrigo Fernández Carrión, and Robert L. Smith. The documents contained in the project include "letters, reports, petitions, and legal proceedings to, from or about the settlements along the present day Mississippi Gulf Coast for the period of Spanish dominion (1780—1811)." The result of this study is an update of his treatise of the Pirate House, which may be found on his website, russ-guerin.com. One item of note is that he discovered hard evidence of piracy at the Pirate House.

NEW MEMBERS

Jim and Candee Canady
Waveland, MS

Miles and Barbara Caggins
Midland, GA

Gavin and Karen Coriell
Lebanon, TN



Falmouth students and chaperones, from L to R: Jon Radtke, Justin Brogan, Shaun Lamoureux, Catherine Hebbson, Nevada Horne, Charlotte Kirk, Libby Kirk, Clara Brown, Patrick O'Donahue, Jack Davies, Hayley Simmons, Holly Eastburn MacEwan

Students Visit

Since Hurricane Katrina Holly MacEwan, a teacher at Falmouth High School in Falmouth, Maine, has made several trips in January with some of her students to Bay St. Louis to vol-

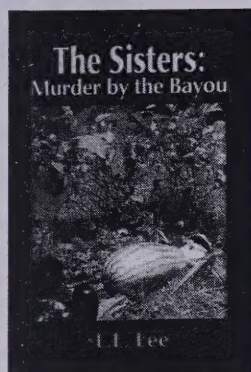
unteer with Habitat for Humanity. One of the highlights of their trip and a delight for the Historical Society is their visit to the Loblano House to learn some of the history of Hancock County from Executive Director, Charles Gray.



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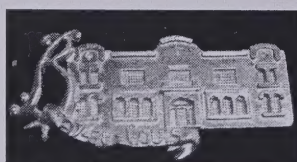
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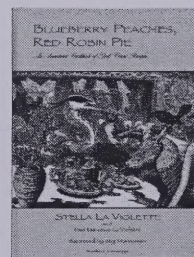


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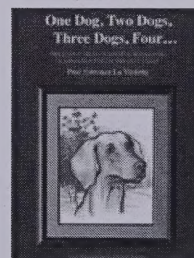
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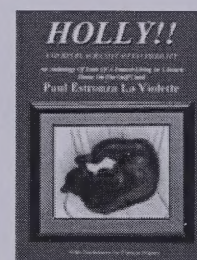
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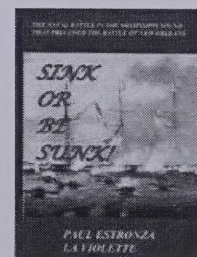
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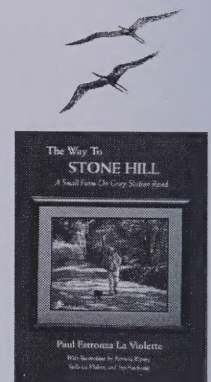
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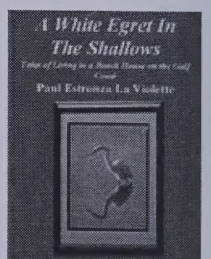
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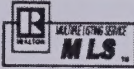
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